

you get sick, by insurance companies. That's exactly what it's going to do. It's going to end that kind of practice and give you more choices.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of Americans object to House Republicans holding hostage the basic government services our citizens expect and need just so they can poke the President in the eye once again by trying to repeal the signature health insurance reform law.

In a recent poll, 8 out of 10 respondents said it is unacceptable for Members of Congress to threaten to shut down the government in order to achieve narrow ideological goals. After last week's House vote on the Republican hostage plan, another poll found more than half of Republican respondents want Congress to keep the government open rather than shut it down over the Affordable Care Act.

So why can't House Republicans accept the Affordable Care Act, which was adopted by Congress and reaffirmed by the Supreme Court and reaffirmed in an election just 10 months ago in this country? They have held 42 votes to chip away or outright repeal this signature law, and they have failed in every one of those attempts.

Senator JOHN MCCAIN, a prominent and respected Republican, tried to counsel his Republican friends on the futility of this effort on the floor of the Senate yesterday by reminding them that elections have consequences. The man who lost the 2008 election to President Obama noted that a majority of Americans reaffirmed their support of this President and his agenda, and by extension his signature initiative, in last year's election.

□ 1045

What is particularly disappointing in this protracted debate is this false narrative that the Affordable Care Act is not working, that it will somehow cause an economic calamity, as the majority leader claimed last week. What truly worries House Republicans, one suspects, isn't that the Affordable Care Act will fail, but precisely the opposite—they are frightened to death it will succeed.

Just this week, we received further confirmation that, in fact, it is delivering on its promise to reverse the skyrocketing costs of health care, unlike the narrative of my friend from Colorado. When the insurance exchanges open for enrollment next week, the Department of Health and Human Services says consumers will find an average of 53 health plans to choose from and premiums 16 percent lower—not higher—than expected, and that's before any tax credits are applied. In my district, for example, a family of four, earning \$50,000 a year, will be able to find a silver-rated insurance plan for less than \$300 a month, and they could pay a zero premium with that subsidy for a bronze-rated plan.

The Affordable Care Act is working for seniors. Premiums and deductibles for Medicare are lower, not higher, and

seniors have saved more than \$7 billion so far in prescription drug costs thanks to closing the doughnut hole of Medicare part D. Enrollment in Medicare Advantage plans has gone up 30 percent since 2010, and premiums have dropped 16 percent since that time. That's a far cry from the kind of demonizing and the "wolf's at the door" rhetoric of some of my friends on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, it is not the Affordable Care Act that puts America at risk of economic calamity, but the reckless actions of my friends on the other side of the aisle who are willing, once again, to hold the American people hostage because they don't like it. They have an ideological agenda that is going to create deep hardship in every one of those households my friend from Colorado just discussed and in every one of the households throughout America.

Let's get on with the business of America, and let's stop the practice of hostage-taking on the floor of the House.

MENTAL ILLNESS AND GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, with the tragic mass shooting last week at the Washington Navy Yard, our country has again been ravaged by preventable gun violence. America must confront these events and their causes to prevent future tragedies.

Since 2007, according to the FBI, there have been 146 reported mass shootings. Far too often, a large contributing factor to this recent surge in violence is untreated mental illness; and in far too many instances, the perpetrators are former members of our military. Our Nation must bridge the gaps in our current mental health system to avoid more tragedies.

The President recently unveiled his BRAIN Initiative. It calls for \$100 million in funding to advance our understanding of the human mind. Supporting this proposal will go a long way to furthering our understanding of the causes and conditions that afflict those who wish to harm others and themselves.

Further, Congressman MCKINLEY of West Virginia and I have introduced H.R. 1615, the Examining America's Mental Health Services Act of 2013. The bill requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the National Academies' Institute of Medicine to conduct a comprehensive study on the gaps in our Nation's mental health services and to explore how these gaps increase the risk of violent acts. Experts such as former Army Vice Chief of Staff Dr. Peter Chiarelli, Dr. Joseph Calabrese of Case Western Reserve University, U.S. Army Colonel Carl Castro, and Dr. E. Fuller Torrey, head of the Stanley Foundation, would be prime candidates to lead breakthrough national initiatives on mental health.

Part of our comprehensive effort should focus on (1) accelerating funding for brain research and neuropsychiatric treatment; (2), reforming military enlistment, discharge procedures and integrating the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs' medical records systems; (3), instituting early childhood behavioral screening in schools; and, (4), restricting gun and ammunition access to those who have serious behavioral disorders.

Additional focus on mental illness and gun access is imperative. The Navy Yard tragedy resulted in the deaths of 13 of our citizens with eight additional people injured. The perpetrator, Aaron Alexis, was aged 34, a Navy Reserve veteran and a contractor to the U.S. Navy. He joined the Naval Reserve and began experiencing conditions that many would describe as related to PTSD, with demonstrable neuro conditions such as schizophrenia or paranoid schizophrenia. However, he was allowed to purchase a Remington 870 pump action shotgun and two boxes of ammunition. Individuals who suffer from these types of ailments should not have access to weapons and stockpiles of ammunition.

Unaddressed mental illness continues to be prevalent in many of our Nation's traumatic mass shootings, and they involve perpetrators who are private citizens as well.

We recall so sadly in Tucson, Arizona, when our own former dear colleague, Rep. Gabby Giffords, and current colleague, Representative RON BARBER, miraculously survived a mass shooting in which six others lost their lives after a deranged gunman, Jared Lee Loughner, opened fire at a meeting at a local supermarket at which Giffords and constituents were gathering.

We saw it at nearby Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007, when Seung-Hui Cho took the lives of 32 people; and we saw it at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December of 2012, when 20-year-old Adam Lanza ended the lives of 20 children and seven adults after taking his own mother's life and then his own.

How many more calls for attention—for help?—does America need to hear?

The killing of two Capitol Police Officers over a decade ago, here in our Capitol, was perpetrated by a man who had been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic who was off his medication, alienated from his family and who got access to a gun.

Congress should be deeply concerned that civilians, as well as our brave men and women who serve or who have served in our Armed Forces, are not receiving the medical treatment required for diagnosing debilitating mental illness and trying to treat it better. An annual Department of Defense report on suicide has shown a precipitous increase in military suicides over the course of the last 5 years. In 2012, there were 349 suicides by military men and women from all branches of the Armed

Forces. That is more than all the combat deaths that same year in Afghanistan. This is an epidemic and requires more attention and investment, including the BRAIN Initiative put forward by the President.

In sum, the common denominator with many of these mass shootings is a mentally ill individual with access to deadly weapons who has not been treated properly or, many times, whose mental illness has not even been evaluated. America must address these deficiencies for the benefit of our entire society. We must accelerate research to unlock the mysteries of the human brain.

Mr. Speaker, the only question is: Do America's leaders on behalf of the American people have the courage and vision to embark on a serious national conversation about mental health and mental illness?

THE WHITE HOUSE,
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY,
April 2, 2013.

FACT SHEET: BRAIN INITIATIVE

"If we want to make the best products, we also have to invest in the best ideas . . . Every dollar we invested to map the human genome returned \$140 to our economy . . . Today, our scientists are mapping the human brain to unlock the answers to Alzheimer's . . . Now is not the time to gut these job-creating investments in science and innovation. Now is the time to reach a level of research and development not seen since the height of the Space Race."—President Barack Obama, 2013 State of the Union.

In his State of the Union address, the President laid out his vision for creating jobs and building a growing, thriving middle class by making a historic investment in research and development.

Today, at a White House event, the President unveiled a bold new research initiative designed to revolutionize our understanding of the human brain. Launched with approximately \$100 million in the President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget, the BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) Initiative ultimately aims to help researchers find new ways to treat, cure, and even prevent brain disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, and traumatic brain injury.

The BRAIN Initiative will accelerate the development and application of new technologies that will enable researchers to produce dynamic pictures of the brain that show how individual brain cells and complex neural circuits interact at the speed of thought. These technologies will open new doors to explore how the brain records, processes, uses, stores, and retrieves vast quantities of information, and shed light on the complex links between brain function and behavior.

This initiative is one of the Administration's "Grand Challenges"—ambitious but achievable goals that require advances in science and technology. In his remarks today, the President called on companies, research universities, foundations, and philanthropists to join with him in identifying and pursuing the Grand Challenges of the 21st century.

The BRAIN Initiative includes:

Key investments to jumpstart the effort: The National Institutes of Health, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the National Science Foundation will support approximately \$100 million in research beginning in FY 2014.

Strong academic leadership: The National Institutes of Health will establish a high-level working group co-chaired by Dr. Cornelia "Cori" Bargmann (The Rockefeller University) and Dr. William Newsome (Stanford University) to define detailed scientific goals for the NIH's investment, and to develop a multi-year scientific plan for achieving these goals, including timetables, milestones, and cost estimates.

Public-private partnerships: Federal research agencies will partner with companies, foundations, and private research institutions that are also investing in relevant neuroscience research, such as the Allen Institute, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Kavli Foundation, and the Salk Institute for Biological Studies.

Maintaining our highest ethical standards: Pioneering research often has the potential to raise new ethical challenges. To ensure this new effort proceeds in ways that continue to adhere to our highest standards of research protections, the President will direct his Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues to explore the ethical, legal, and societal implications raised by this research initiative and other recent advances in neuroscience.

BACKGROUND

In the last decade alone, scientists have made a number of landmark discoveries that now create the opportunity to unlock the mysteries of the brain, including the sequencing of the human genome, the development of new tools for mapping neuronal connections, the increasing resolution of imaging technologies, and the explosion of nanoscience. These breakthroughs have paved the way for unprecedented collaboration and discovery across scientific fields. For instance, by combining advanced genetic and optical techniques, scientists can now use pulses of light to determine how specific cell activities in the brain affect behavior. In addition, through the integration of neuroscience and physics, researchers can now use high-resolution imaging technologies to observe how the brain is structurally and functionally connected in living humans.

While these technological innovations have contributed substantially to our expanding knowledge of the brain, significant breakthroughs in how we treat neurological and psychiatric disease will require a new generation of tools to enable researchers to record signals from brain cells in much greater numbers and at even faster speeds. This cannot currently be achieved, but great promise for developing such technologies lies at the intersections of nanoscience, imaging, engineering, informatics, and other rapidly emerging fields of science and engineering.

KEY INVESTMENTS TO LAUNCH THIS EFFORT

To make the most of these opportunities, the National Institutes of Health, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the National Science Foundation are launching this effort with funding in the President's FY 2014 budget.

National Institutes of Health: The NIH Blueprint for Neuroscience Research—an initiative that pools resources and expertise from across 15 NIH Institutes and Centers—will be a leading NIH contributor to the implementation of this initiative in FY 2014. The Blueprint program will contribute funding for the initiative, given that the Blueprint funds are specifically devoted to projects that support the development of new tools, training opportunities, and other resources. In total, NIH intends to allocate approximately \$40 million in FY 2014.

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency: In FY 2014, DARPA plans to invest \$50 million in a set of programs with the goal of understanding the dynamic functions of the

brain and demonstrating breakthrough applications based on these insights. DARPA aims to develop a new set of tools to capture and process dynamic neural and synaptic activities. DARPA is interested in applications—such as a new generation of information processing systems and restoration mechanisms—that dramatically improve the way we diagnose and treat warfighters suffering from post-traumatic stress, brain injury, and memory loss. DARPA will engage a broad range of experts to explore the ethical, legal, and societal issues raised by advances in neurotechnology.

National Science Foundation: The National Science Foundation will play an important role in the BRAIN Initiative because of its ability to support research that spans biology, the physical sciences, engineering, computer science, and the social and behavioral sciences. The National Science Foundation intends to support approximately \$20 million in FY 2014 in research that will advance this initiative, such as the development of molecular-scale probes that can sense and record the activity of neural networks; advances in "Big Data" that are necessary to analyze the huge amounts of information that will be generated, and increased understanding of how thoughts, emotions, actions, and memories are represented in the brain.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 252. An act to reduce preterm labor and delivery and the risk of pregnancy-related deaths and complications due to pregnancy, and to reduce infant mortality caused by prematurity.

The message also announced that the Senate concurs in the amendment of the House to bill (S. 793), "An Act to support revitalization and reform of the Organization of American States, and for other purposes."

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 52 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Dear Lord, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We come to You as a Nation in the midst of great uncertainty and worry. As people look for causes and solutions, the temptation is great to seek ideological position.